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self has been taken apart in thought, he points out, it is difficult to put it together again; yet it has never been really taken apart. Its assertion of reality and of its own worth cannot be mechanistically explained.

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GERMANY VS. CIVILIZATION. By William Roscoe Thayer. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916.

Of American books about the war, this of Mr. Thayer's is perhaps the most genuinely unpassioned and the most effectively rhetorical that has been written. Mr. Thayer, who recently gave us *The Life and Letters of John Hay*, is notable among American prose writers for the clarity and grace and the sinewy strength of his style. As a biographer he has shown himself capable of fine sympathy and judicious interpretation. One expects much of Mr. Thayer; but unfortunately it cannot be said that his book, *Germany vs. Civilization*, is in any respect a valuable contribution to the subject which forms its theme.

The defect is not merely that Mr. Thayer has nothing new to offer in the way of explanation or philosophic forecast. There is, besides, a certain superficiality of thought throughout the book, and a tendency toward sweeping generalization. The very questionable view that the behavior of the German people in relation to the present war is explicable on the ground of inherited savagery is urged with unjustifiable sureness and unnecessary bitterness. The effect upon the German mind of the recent German philosophers and pseudo-philosophers—Nietzsche, Treitschke, Bernhardi and the rest—is emphasized beyond critical moderation. The general impression left is that the creed of Kultur is not merely an influence, of such weight, say, as the philosophic element in the French Revolution, but a sort of yellow streak that runs from top to bottom of German society. The author's denunciation of the Kaiser gives an impression of that potentate as such a demon *ex machina* as perhaps never was or can be. It seems unhistorical in temper, and even a little childish.

Mr. Thayer's book is chiefly an appeal to feeling. In estimating such a book one perhaps ought not to apply too strictly mere scholarly standards of criticism. But the question may be asked: Just what good end can be accomplished by such an appeal at such a time? Americans, it may be supposed, have pretty generally made up their minds as to the right and wrong of the present war. Indignation, presumably, has passed into sober conviction.

A certain degree of violence of expression may no doubt be forgiven a man whose heart is generously stirred by reports of German iniquities in Belgium. These things are bad enough, some of us think. No true American can regard without detestation the German policy of frightfulness. We are, most of us, "human, all too

human," and we are not at all Nietzschean. But, on the whole, the best commentary on the tone of Mr. Thayer's book is supplied by the very calm and judicial spirit of some of the best English writers who have dealt with the war.

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THE CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY. By Henry Otis Dwight. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916.

The year 1916 marks the one-hundredth anniversary of a society which has unobtrusively exerted a tremendous spiritualizing and civilizing influence. The work of the American Bible Society has been the faithful carrying out of a single large and simple idea—the supplying of the Scriptures to all who will receive them. Those to whom the simplicity of the idea suggests ease of accomplishment or unfruitfulness of result should read Henry Otis Dwight's History. It is an inspiring record showing how the effort to live up to one of the "nearest duties" may result in an unlooked-for extension of the sphere of activity, in unforeseen difficulties and in unanticipated success.

The idea of a national Bible Society did not, of course, originate in the United States; the British and Foreign Bible Society was established in 1804, antedating the American Society by twelve years. Before 1816 there were in this country many local societies, of which the Philadelphia Bible Society, organized in 1808, was the oldest. These societies, however, lacked largeness of vision; the spiritual needs of a vast and growing country were imperfectly realized. It was not until 1810 that the devoted efforts of Samuel J. Mills and other "like-minded young men" who felt the missionary call, revealed the extent of "destitution" among American frontiersmen. On returning from his first missionary expedition Mills was supplied with Bibles by the New York and Philadelphia societies. The distribution which followed, was, however, but a drop in the bucket. The reports of Mills and his companions stirred religiously minded men, and at last, in 1816, as the result of action taken by the New Jersey Bible Society, under the leadership of its president, the Honorable Elias Boudinot, a national organization was formed.

The scope of the society's work extended widely and rapidly. As Mr. Dwight remarks, "Home and foreign missions are among the things which God has joined and man may not put asunder." The society found that it could not consistently limit its work to the United States; opportunities for foreign service were too obvious to be put aside, and very early in its career the distribution of Bibles in Latin America was begun. In time the field broadened to include the whole world. An enthusiastic faith led to the undertaking of enterprises of ever-increasing size. In 1829, when the population